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**THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN AN ENGLISH  
CLASSROOM**

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**Plzeň 2013**

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Veronika Macháčová

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis deals with the role of translation within the English classroom. The specific aim of this work is to highlight the importance of translation while learning a second language. The theoretical background of the thesis provides a historical overview concerning various approaches to translation. Consequently translation is depicted as an important element of the globalised world. With the development of teaching methods translation has gained more and more importance and therefore it is claimed that translation could enrich the four basic skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking and could be considered the fifth skill. This issue is also dealt with in the theoretical part of this work. Moreover the question of using the mother tongue in the class is being discussed because this topic is causing a lot of controversy among the teachers nowadays. In connection to this topic the directions of translating either from the mother tongue into a foreign language or vice versa are depicted.

The practical part of the thesis is focused on the conducted research that has been carried out by the means of a questionnaire that has been compiled in two various versions (both for teachers and students) in order to examine the students' and teachers' opinions on translation activities. The results of the researches have shown that both students and teachers are aware of the benefits and positive aspects that the translating activities bring into the classroom.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

We find translation everywhere around us without even realizing it. People are surrounded by translated texts in their homes, offices or supermarkets. In other words our life would be much more difficult without translations, because we would not know how to use a mobile phone, how to turn on a washing machine or how to read a book written by a foreign author. Schäffner (2000) claims that “Translation as an activity leading to a product has a tradition reaching far back to the beginnings of recorded history and beyond that the oral tradition. It has always been essential for trading and also a fundamental component of classical education” (p. VII).

Communication takes place not only in the oral but also in the written form – emails, sms, chat, etc. Everybody has the possibility to communicate with the rest of the world and in this moment an ability to express thoughts plays a significant role. Science, trade, medicine, politics, law, international relations or commerce would not have been developed enough and would be limited without translations. Thanks to translating people gain knowledge and information from all over the world very easily. For the majority of people is „switching” between two languages an everyday process at work. Without translation we would not be able to develop a communication process with people whose language is different to our mother tongue. Of course the idea that we all could learn a common language comes to mind, but “if we balk at adopting a common tongue and decline to learn the other languages we need, we could simply ignore people who do not speak the way we do” (Bellos, 2011, p. 11).

As can be estimated from all the points mentioned above the main aim of this thesis is to explore the role of translation in an English classroom. In other words the impact of translation activities on the second language acquisition is examined.

The theoretical part introduces the importance of translation within the context of the globalised world and it continues with the description of the historical background of the use of translation and its development in the course of time. Subsequently the impact of translation on the development of the four basic skills and on the learning of grammar and vocabulary is described. There are two main directions (from the mother tongue into the foreign language and vice versa) in which the translation can take place; these are also described in the theoretical part. Moreover the use of mother tongue in the class is discussed as it causes a lot of controversy among teachers and as it is closely connected to

the translation activities. At the end of this chapter the role of the teacher within the translation process and the consequent evaluation possibilities are interpreted.

The practical part is focused on the research that is based on the questionnaire that has been compiled in order to find out the opinion on translating activities both from students and teachers. The most important findings and results are presented in the form of graphs and commentaries.

## **II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

The objective of this chapter is to provide the basic framework concerning the use of translation in second language acquisition. In other words, the aim of this part is to explain the positive aspects of the translation process, stress its impacts on language acquisition and introduce arguments for its implementation into foreign language learning and teaching.

Firstly, a rather general topic concerning the connection between globalisation and translation is introduced in order to highlight the importance of translation not only within the classroom environment but also within the globalised world where the significance of translation grows rapidly. The second part deals with the historical background of translation process (Grammar- Translation Method) and with its development in the course of time. The next part of this chapter describes the positive impact of translation activities and it brings up the benefits of the translation activities for students at the same time. Many authors describe the translation as the fifth skill that completes the other four skills. Therefore the next section provides various explanations of how to use translation alongside of these four skills in order to develop them efficiently. Further on, the often discussed topic of the use of the mother tongue in the classroom is introduced. This part deals not only with positive effects that the use of the native tongue can have but also with the negative consequences of this method. The subsequent part considers the differences that occur while translating either into the source language (mother tongue) or into the target language (foreign tongue). Basically, the differences between these two methods are stated. Further on, the inclusion of the translation process to the communicative approach to foreign language teaching is outlined in order to demonstrate that translation activities should be included in the contemporary approach to learning. The teacher's role in regard to translation is described in the following chapter to stress the significance of a good counsellor and mentor within the translation process. The last part is oriented on the evaluation of the translation process and on the summary of this whole part.

### **Globalisation and Translation**

According to Block globalisation is “the observable ongoing process of the increasing and ever-more intensive interconnectedness of communications, events,

activities and relationships taking place at the local, national or international level”(Cook, 2010, p. 43).

Globalisation is a long-lasting process that has been taken place for many years and has indeed influenced everyone’s life in many aspects. The main aim of globalisation is to interconnect different people from different parts of the world in order to be globally united in many spheres, e.g. economy, technology, politics, trade etc.

Globalisation has also influenced the sphere of education and its teaching approaches, because the educational system is influenced by the development and should respond to the society needs and requests in order not to become obsolete and useless.

Globalisation has a significant impact on many social fields as Cook (2010) explains “Although much of the literature on globalisation focuses upon its economic and communications-technology aspects, it is also a linguistic phenomenon” (p. 43).

Globalisation has also a significant impact on translation, because nowadays all the countries are cooperating and are to a certain extent becoming one huge community that has to work together in order to be successful and productive. The increased demand on translation has its roots in a growing need to exchange and share information (e.g. internationalisation of business) between various nations. Popovic (n.d.) states that ”Moreover, with the increased mobility of persons and goods in unified, multilingual Europe, translation is expected to be practiced almost on daily basis” (Do learners really need translation?, para.4). In other words, translation has the ability to relate different languages of different nations into a communication process that will be understandable to every participant of globalisation. Therefore translation should not be longer seen as an invalid activity that does not contribute to development and improvement (both in the society and in the classroom). In fact translation is a common real life activity that takes place more and more often.

## **Historical Background**

### **Grammar -Translation Method and Other Approaches**

This method is considered the oldest approaches in foreign language teaching. Lafuente (2012) states that “Grammar – Translation method was used to teach modern languages such as Latin or Greek mostly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (p. 6). The rules of this method are

based on a brief explanation of grammar in a mother tongue and on intense translation practice with the help of an isolated vocabulary list. Grammar is seen as a logical structure of rules and facts that can be taught only by drilling and memorising. The exceptions to the grammatical rules are mostly left out or are explained very briefly.

The language is seen as a system of clear facts and rules that have to be memorised and applied within the translation process. The student is expected to study the given grammatical features, memorise them and then use them while translating a text. It was very difficult for the students to choose the word that is crucial or should be memorised. The main aim was to master the grammar and to be able to read difficult literary works. Little emphasis was laid on pronunciation or on an active usage of the target language, in other words the significance of being able to communicate in the second language was not a goal of this method. Critics claim that this approach was rather unnatural and too authoritarian, because it was based more on the teacher's activity than on the student's individual development. Cook (2010) defines this teaching method as "teacher-centred and teacher-led" (p.11).

On the other hand Grammar Translation has also its merits: "it develops grammatical accuracy, grammatical metalanguage, and written translations skills" (Cook, 2010, p.14). Furthermore it can be seen as a good mental activity which helps develop students' minds, in terms of various activities that are based on this method, such as synonym/antonym exercises, fill-in-the-blanks activity, memorisation of vocabulary, deductive grammar application etc.

### **Why Use Translation in the Classroom and Its Benefits to Students**

The verb "translate" has Latin and Greek origin and "its basic meaning is that carrying something across, from Latin *transferre* or Greek *metapherein*" (Leonardi, 2010, p. 65). Conde (2006) states that the etymology of the word translation comes from "*trans* "through" and *latus* "side", so it should mean something like "move something from one side to another" (p. 8). Translation process has been developing for many centuries. Beeby observes that "Bilingual inscriptions have been found in Mesopotamia that date from 3000 B.C. The bureaucratic apparatus of the Roman Empire could not have functioned without translators" (Beeby, 1996, p. 23). For the purpose of this study and its topic that deals with the current use of translation in the classroom I would like to quote Jean Delisle who states

that: “The purpose of academic or pedagogical translation is to help students acquire basics of the language or, for the more advanced, to improve their style. The final work is never the aim but it is always about the process” (as cited in Nĕmec, 2011, p. 5).

Conde (2006) points out that “Translators work as operators to transfer messages from language into another while preserving the underlying cultural and discursal ideas and values” (p. 9). Therefore translation is a kind of activity that requires an excellent knowledge of both L1 and L2. “It is the essential bilingual act, the moment when both languages are simultaneously in play” (Campbell, 1998, p. 22). As described above for the translation process to be successful the translator also must have a very good cross-cultural knowledge, because translating does not only mean to produce a grammatically correct text, but it also includes cultural / intercultural competence. For these reasons many authors claim that the incorporation of the translation activities can lead to more effective and extensive foreign language acquisition.

Translation is not only a work with a text but it is also a communicative and cognitive process that enriches student’s skills such as “linguistic competence in the native language and in the foreign language with regard to formal and semantic aspects of vocabulary and grammar, language varieties, register and style, text- type conventions”(Beeby, 1996, p. 10). In other words translation facilitates and speeds up the comprehension of a text, draws students’ attention to linguistic features, stimulates a deep analysis of a text and increases students’ self-confidence. Thanks to translation students are able to think comparatively and are aware of differences and similarities in both L1 and L2, moreover they realise that the usage of their mother tongue within a classroom can have a positive impact on their learning. According to Leonardi (2010) translation develops pragmatic, interpretative and strategic competences, which means that students know how to work with a text and its lexis and are able to “make sense of meanings” (p. 122).

On the whole students can simultaneously deal with both languages and at the same time and develop their creativity, flexibility, decision-making strategies and train their memory. Nadstoga(n.d.) points out that “Students learn a great deal as they discover that it is not always possible to attain exact equivalence and as they evaluate possible versions to see which most fully captures all the implications of the original” (p. 137). As a result they will have more chances to successfully learn a foreign language on a basis of

comparison and of insights into both languages. Translation should not be avoided, because it is used by many learners (of all levels) on a daily basis either formally or informally and as Kaye states “developing skills in translation is a natural and logical part of improving language proficiency” (Kavaliauskiene, 2010, p. 4). For these reasons translation is sometimes referred to as a fifth skill alongside to the four basic skills – writing, reading, listening and speaking.

### **Translation – the Fifth Skill**

The Grammar- Translation Method had discouraged teachers from integrating translation into the classroom, because it was seen as a mechanical unnatural activity that should not be included in the second language acquisition, because it is a text-bounded activity that is time-consuming and boring and does not relate with “real-world language and activities”(Cook, 2010, p. 37). May be, for this negative associations translating is not integrated in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) that was created to develop the four basic skills – writing, reading, listening and speaking. Naimushin (2002) states that “However the reasonable and well-prepared use of translation and interpreting work in FLT classroom can be an efficient tool alongside the other four basic skills” (p. 47). Basically, students are able to link all four (five) skills and therefore teaching should be focused on an integrative approach to learning.

According to Leonardi (2010) the translation process “is much more complex than it may seem and it involves a series of activities, which, indeed, include reading, writing, speaking and listening” (p. 24). Translation can be seen as an additional activity that develops a complex view on the language in the terms of grammar, syntax and lexis that requires a profound knowledge of both L1 and L2. The teachers’ and also students’ aim is to master the language, in other words to be able to fluently communicate in all sorts of communication, to be able to use an extensive amount of vocabulary and understand as much information in L2 as possible, which means to reach a level of a native speaker.

To translate means to be able to switch from one language to another without any problems. To translate a text into mother tongue (whether read or listened to) is a natural activity that every learner tends to do while learning a new language in order to be sure that the understanding of a text is correct (eventhough the student is asked not to do so). For this reason translating should not be omitted from the second language acquisition,



because it is a natural process. Translation helps the student get used to think in the target language both in oral and written form. According to Leonardi (2010) “Translation can be used in any language course in order to strengthen students’ analytical skills in reading and analysing texts and in developing creativity and problem-solving strategies which could be applied later on their daily activities” (p. 29).

## **Reading**

Many authors claim that “When we read or listen any “text” we create for ourselves an interpretation of that text built on the information the text itself supplies , but we also add to it our own memories, experience and understanding of the world” (Witte, Harden,& Harden, 2009, p. 346). In other words, while reading a text in L2 students are mostly unconsciously translating the information into their mother tongue and they use the already gained knowledge and vocabulary in order to understand the meaning of a text. According to Leonardi (2003), “If their thoughts and mental translations are externalised through co-operative translation activities with both teachers and peers in the classroom, the comprehension can be enhanced” (p. 23).

Leonardi (2010) also states that “in terms of reading, the source text should be read carefully and analysed in detail before the translation can take place” (p. 23). In other words, before every translation activity can take place, the student has to go through the text carefully and profoundly. By doing so the student realises various linguistic features such as grammar, vocabulary, syntax, spelling, etc. and can also practice various reading techniques such as skimming and scanning. The teacher’s task is to choose a text that will be motivating and interesting because “L2 learners reading in the context of learning a foreign language start with the potential disadvantage, that is that they may have neither an intrinsic nor extrinsic need to read (Lafuente, 2012, p. 2). Therefore the factor of motivation and the social -context of the reading and translating activities plays a significant role.

## **The top – down approach to reading / translation**

According to Harmer (2007) “in top- down processing, the reader (or listener) gets a general view of the reading or listening passage by, in some way, absorbing the overall

picture” (p.270). Basically, this approach puts emphasis on the interaction between the reader and the text. Students use not only their linguistic knowledge but also their socio – cultural knowledge and motivation in order to understand the text in a complex way. The same process can be applied to the translation activities because as Ribé (1998) states “A top-down approach to translation starts with an understanding of the text as a whole - its purpose, function , style, the intention of the author , the cultural setting and the audience for which it was written” (p. 7).

## **Writing**

According to Scrivener (2005) “Writing involves a different kind of mental process. There is more time to think, to reflect, to prepare, to rehearse, to make mistakes and to find alternative and better solutions” (p. 192). The same idea can be applied to the translation process because both writing and translating require good knowledge of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. and give students more time to prepare, express their ideas and eliminate so the mistakes ( in contrast to speaking) either in their mother tongue or in the foreign language.

To translate means to transpose the source text into the target one, which can be considered by many teachers a time-consuming activity that will rather discourage and demotivate students from learning. However there are many possibilities how to integrate writing/ translating into the learning process. While working on writing activities teachers should more concentrate on the process (rather than on the product). The same fact can be applied on translation activities. Harmer (2007) points out that “we want students to focus more on the process of writing than its product” (p. 325). Lafuente (2012) states that writing / translating as a process includes various stages such as:

1. Planning and prewriting
2. Composing and drafting
3. Revising and editing

There are many possible examples of translation activities that can be done relatively quickly in the classroom such as translation of shorter sequences such as of a postcard, letter, newspaper article etc. Of course students can work with larger sequences

of different forms such as with reports, short stories, essays, etc. Furthermore students can be asked to write a commentary on the text, where they could describe the difficulties they encountered with during the translation process and/ or consequently create a glossary with new vocabulary.

### **Speaking and Listening**

It is not right to think that translation does not include speaking and listening skills. Students can discuss the topic of the text in L2 with a teacher or with peers. An interaction between the teacher and students can occur while talking about the text, its features or while arguing about mistakes or grammatical rules. Carreres states that “Translation, by its very nature, is an activity that invites discussion and students are only too happy to contribute to it, often defending their version with remarkable passion and persuasiveness” (as cited in Mogahed, 2011, p. 3). Translation can be only one part of the whole lesson that introduces a new topic or encourages the students to express their opinions on the content of the text, on its cultural background, etc. Consequently there can be a discussion on the produced translation, because at the end every student will produce a different outcome.

### **Vocabulary and Grammar**

Many authors state that vocabulary learning is one of the most important and at the same time difficult parts of foreign language acquisition. The knowledge of vocabulary is essential not only for successful reading activities but also for a successful translation. Sökmen points out that “The reason we are focusing on vocabulary is that the acquisition of vocabulary has a central role in learning a second language” (as cited in Latsanyphone and Bouangeune, 2009, p. 187). As mentioned above, Grammar- Translation Method was based on translation either of isolated sentences or wordlists without a concrete context. However, “Students need to see words in context to see how they are used” (Harmer, 2007, p. 229). In other words thanks to the translation process students work with texts that are set into a concrete context and are more probable to acquire the new vocabulary.

According to Cook (2010) “One traditional but effective use of translation is to introduce new vocabulary” (p. 140). Various translation activities can help students learn specific vocabulary, expressions, idioms or collocations of a certain topic (e.g. business,

law, education, food, etc.) on the basis of translating from L1 to L2 or vice versa, while looking for synonyms/ antonyms, while creating a glossary, working with a dictionary or discussing meaning of a certain word. Thanks to translation students learn how to use words in various contexts and more importantly, they learn how to work with negative transfer :”If students are aware of the differences, interference is likely to be reduced” (Leonardi, 2010, p. 19).

When learning grammar many students feel either anxiety or boredom because grammar is usually considered the most demanding part of language learning. Grammar is connected with a lot of theory, explanations, rules and exceptions that are essential for the language acquisition because “its correct usage is very important for communication, because incorrect grammar structures can influence understanding” (Vašátová, 2009, p. 6). It is important to realise that grammar is not only a list of fixed principles that have to be memorised. As Scrivener states “grammar only makes sense if you can use it” (as cited in Vašátová, 2009, p. 6).

The Grammar- Translation Method has been refused by many teachers because of its traditional and obsolete approach to language learning that was based on the exclusive usage of the mother tongue. However, this method has also its merits that can be used for grammar explanation and acquisition. Elizabeth and Rao (2007) explain that “By telling the meaning of a word or sentence in mother tongue, the teacher can at once make the students understand” (p. 52). Cook (2010) states that “the key principle of this approach is that the translation exercises should contain only words and constructions which have already been encountered” (p. 10). This fact facilitates the learning process because students know what to expect and possibly they feel less stressed. This method can be also used as a tool of testing because it is quite simple to prepare and to control a test / homework based on the Grammar- Translation Method. ”An added benefit of using translation exercises in class is their inherent value as an indicator of how well the student has assimilated a new item of vocabulary or grammar” (Baker, 2006, p. 2).

Since there can be found more drawbacks than merits of this method it should be used rather occasionally in the classroom. This method should be considered a complementation and as one of the many approaches to the EFL.

For the above mentioned reasons translating should be regarded as a kind of complementation of other activities rather than a replacement of the four basic skills

because “if taught in a way that resembles the real life activity of translating, can bring into play the four basic skills and yield benefits in L2 acquisition” (Pan, Y. Pan, 2012, p. 15). In other words translation used within the classroom from time to time should be considered an aid that facilitates the learning process on the basis of reducing the differences between the Grammar- Translation Method and the Communicative Approach. Moreover, thanks to translation, students will feel less stressed while learning a foreign language because they will learn that even though they do not understand certain words or phrases in a text there will always be a possible way how to successfully translate those problematic parts.

### **Mother Tongue Use in the Classroom – Advantage/ Downside**

The question whether L1 should be used in classroom is causing a lot of controversy among both teachers and scientists. In the past ( e.g. Direct Method) the use of mother tongue has been considered rather a negative and harmful approach to FLT- the reform movements basically rejected to use L1 and translation while learning a new language because of its supposed inflexibility and unnaturalness. Grammatical and lexical errors were imputed to the influence of L1. In addition there have been many disputes concerning the negative interference that can occur while using the native language in the classroom. On the other hand “Recent studies, indeed, have shown that L1 influence can enrich language competence and proficiency rather than being associated with negative transfer” (Leonardi, 2010, p. 60). Moreover translation can be used as a means of control in those cases where interference may arise. Moreover there is a little probability that the teacher will leave the interference uncorrected. For these reasons the usage of L1 in the classroom was described as crucial for successful and proficient learner.

Recently there have been many studies that support the implementation of L1 and translation for various reasons. “The use of translation and/or L1 in FL classes is a natural phenomenon since L1 and L2 are constantly and automatically interwoven in learner’s mind at all levels, such as phonology, syntax, lexis and pragmatics”(Leonardi, 2010,p. 62). Students are gaining new knowledge and information through comparison between L1 and L2 and for this reason the exclusive usage of L2 could lead to a lot of mistakes and misunderstandings. Many teachers confirm that translation is a very useful and facilitating tool for explaining and learning grammar because ”grammar becomes less frightening and more accessible if students are allowed to use their mother tongue” ( Dilkova, 2010, p. 3).

Nowadays teaching is dominated by the communicative approach that supports the interaction between the student and the teacher, lays emphasis on the context and on the social purpose of the language learning. Naimushin (2002) points out that “Ironically, when even the most ardent adherents of communicative methods find themselves on the receiving end of “communicative teaching”, they do not seem to feel extremely comfortable about the experience. Every now and then, they switch into their mother tongue for explanation and clarification” (p. 47). Basically, many teachers agree that they use L1 while presenting grammar rules, explaining errors, negotiating meanings of words, giving instructions, going over homework, checking comprehension of a recently explained language item, improving discipline or for classroom management in order to maximize the understanding. Cook (2010) states that “Mother- tongue use, in short, is the way to compensate for the difference between natural first-language and instructed additional-language acquisition” (p. 51). Furthermore the usage of the own language brings benefits concerning the psychological and communicative aspects. Each of the students possesses different abilities and it is not possible for all of them to have the same level of knowledge, for this reason the usage of L1 can allow more effective interaction between the students and the teacher, moreover those who feel anxious about using the F2 will get the impression of security and identity while having the possibility to speak in L1.” Stated another way, acquisition of L2 might be facilitated if L1 can be effectively incorporated into the process of L2 learning” (Pan, Y. Pan, 2012, p. 7).

On the other hand the exclusive or excessive use of L1 will reduce the exposure to L2. For this reason every teacher should find a reasonable approach to keep balance between L1 and L2 and be aware when, why and to which extent the L1 will be used in the classroom in order to ensure efficiency, beneficialness and the natural character of learning. “When the message is clear for students, then all other activities should be done using the target language” (Alrefaai, 2013, p. 7). In other words the L1 used in the classroom should be considered as a kind of support that will be useful for the students while encountering difficulties. “It should function as a scaffolding that the teacher puts up to build up his/ her students’ ability to use English and takes down when the solid framework of the building has been set up” (Yoshifumi, n.d., p. 34). The above mentioned balance can be achieved by translation because translation provides students with specific language competences, so that they can compare and notice differences between both

languages and are able to communicate within the two-way language system. “Atkinson clearly states that translation to the target language which emphasizes a recently taught language item is a means to reinforce structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages”(Vaezi, Mirzaei, 2007, p. 2) In other words thanks to the comparison between the mother tongue and foreign language students encounter less problems concerning the question of interference, moreover they can easily notice the differences/ similarities, which helps them better understand, learn and remember the new language. Ross (2000) states that “The areas where differences occur range from relatively small points such as 'false friends', through sizeable areas such as tense systems, to more complex fields such as contrastive rhetoric. But in all cases, if students are aware of the differences, interference is likely to be reduced” (Areas of intervention, para. 7).

### **Differences in Translation Directions**

There are two possible ways how to translate: students can translate a text written in their mother tongue into a foreign language or vice versa. The native language is naturally acquired while every foreign language has to be learned. For this reason translation from L1 into L2 can cause more problems – e.g. translation of idioms, collocations, puns, fixed expressions, perfect understanding of the context and lexis (some words can have more meanings). On the other hand students are “forced” to work with dictionaries and grammar books, discuss the problematic parts with their classmates and the teacher and as a result they produce a translation which creation is based on their learning process.

While translating into L1 students are supposed to have a higher level of knowledge concerning syntax, morphology, semantics, lexis and of cultural background because they translate into their mother tongue. Even though the source text will be written in a foreign language many researches claim that the process of translating is easier and faster for many students.

As mentioned above any L2 has to be learned because of its non – native character. Therefore while translating into L2 students can encounter difficulties concerning grammar, syntax, lexis (one word can have more meanings) etc.”In translating into a second language, comprehension of the source text is the easier aspect, the real difficulty is in producing a target text in a language in which composition does not come naturally”

(Campbell,1998, p. 57). In other words a deeper knowledge of linguistic areas and also of cross-cultural issues is needed. For this reasons most experts favour the translation into the mother tongue. On the other hand students are asked to work with dictionaries and grammar books in order to be aware of the meanings of collocations, idioms, puns, fixed expressions etc. They are taught to deal with the language not only from the linguistic point of view but also from its historical background and its current development to be able to translate their ideas, thoughts and sentences into L2.

### **The Communicative Approach in Translation Teaching**

The Communicative Approach to foreign language learning supports the idea to teach the four (five) skills in such a way that connects language and communication. The basis of this approach can be in brief described as: language learning is learning to communicate or “the communicative approach is one which focuses its attention not on language as such, but on what is done with the language” (Parks, n.d., p. 1). In other words “Communicative language teaching is based on the assumption that whatever language units or language forms a student comes across and grasps, she or he will make sense and use of them” (Wood, Cabrera, n.d., p. 134). Many teachers and researches claim that translation process can not be seen as an activity that supports the idea of the communicative approach in teaching and learning. However, the activity of translating is based on the decision – making process that should be always consulted within the classroom. Ribé (1998) states that “Deciding implies reflecting first. In class it means thinking out loud“ (p. 8). Moreover translation “has a structure which includes its aims, the means to achieve them, the different stages of the process, sub-phases, and the results of the process” (Lvóvskaya, 2000, p. 30). Furthermore translation fits into the basic ideas of the communicative approach because as Finnocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) state:

Translation focuses rather on meaning than the form- learners are expected to express meaning as well as to understand meanings in oral and written form. Moreover it is oriented on language that appears in context – contextualization is a basic premise in CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) because it is accepted that language is used to express meanings in real contexts and it is believed that communication occurs only when the activity is purposive and is directed at the delivery of an actual message (as cited in Lafuente, 2012, p. 4).



Parks (n.d.) states other reasons that support this idea:

Translation includes various resources and techniques that help students communicate – according to their age, interest, personal experience, etc. Furthermore it offers an excellent practice in the interpretation of texts and offers the opportunity to put the text in its larger communicative context. (p. 241).

### **Task – Based Translation Teaching**

Willis states that “A task is an activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome” (Lafuente, 2012, p. 34). Translation is a kind of task that is based on “*learning by doing* – learning based on practical experience. It is based on *problem- solving* and *reflected –practice* activities” (Ribé, 1998, p. 5). In other words the task based language learning is based on learning by completing real- world tasks (in our case to translate texts students can encounter with in real-world situations, such as business letters, menus, timetables, web pages, job applications, etc.) that are meaningful for the learner and support the process of learning. While translating students are interacting with both the native and the target language and are developing their second language because “tasks are believed to foster the process of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are the hearth of second language learning” (Lafuente, 2012, p. 228,).

To sum up the communicative approach emphasises three basic learning principles: the communicative principle, task principle and meaningfulness principle. These principles can be applied in the translation process because translation enables students to work on authentic tasks that involve the integration of various skills.

### **Translation Competence**

As mentioned below translation has been considered an inefficient and useless activity for a long time. Based on the development of methods within the foreign language teaching, translation and translation methodology are nowadays being regarded as helpful and meaningful approaches to the foreign language teaching (FLT). Baer and Koby (2003) point out that “Developments in foreign language pedagogy over the last twenty – five

years that were engendered by the shift from behaviourist models (Skinner) to cognitive models (Bloom, Piaget, Vygotsky) of language acquisition, offer translator trainers a variety of new instructional methodologies” (p. VIII). In other words the cognitive trend substituted the mechanical learning patterns and introduced new learning styles that encourage the learner to actively and creatively use the second language in order to develop a conscious comprehension of the foreign language.

I would like to briefly describe the term (translation) competence. According to Schäffner (2000) a (translation) competence includes abilities that enable students to fulfil a certain task. In the case of translation these abilities involve flexibility, problem-solving capacity, creative thinking, awareness of the purpose of a translation, knowledge of L1 and L2 - in other words a student has to possess different skills in order to be able to follow the heterogeneity of the translation process.

According to many authors the translation competence is based on sub-competences, such as the language competence, textual competence, transfer competence, subject competence and cultural competence. The teacher can then either evaluate these competences as a whole and look only on the product, i.e. on the final translation or can evaluate the translation as a process.

### **Teacher’s Role during the Translation Process**

Translation process is a kind of activity that requires a collaborative, communicative and interactive working atmosphere; therefore the teacher plays a significant role. The main responsibility is to provide as many opportunities to develop and improve the translation (language) skills as possible.”The teacher’s task is to assess students’ needs and select material to illustrate particular aspects of the language and the structure which present difficulties for students in the English language” (Dagiliene, 2012, p. 125).

However, the main aim of the translation activity is not to produce a perfect translation but rather to learn new vocabulary and grammar, analyse a text from different points of view (different styles, registers, coherence, cohesion, discourse, etc.), discuss problematic parts of a text, speculate, argue for the best solution, eliminate mistakes, etc. “There can never be an ideal or perfect translation or only one way to produce an adequate

translation” (Kiraly, 1995, p. 21). This fact distinguishes the pedagogical and real translation because the pedagogical translation is used not as a goal but as a tool to foreign language acquisition. Therefore the teacher should be not only a guide and counsellor but also an evaluator and facilitator who considers translation an open activity and who takes into account students’ learning style, abilities, attitude, level of knowledge, psychological and physical background, world knowledge, etc.”Nevertheless, the type, quantity, and function of translation activity must vary with the stage which learners have reached, with their ages, and with their own preferences, learning styles, and experience” (Cook, 2010, p. 129).

However the teacher should not forget that the one who is the main decision-maker within the translation process is the student. The teacher’s role is to provide students with useful methods and “instruments” to help them deal with the text and create optimal translation under given conditions with regard to the learner autonomy. “The fact that student learns to learn becomes much more important than memorising and regurgitating passively received knowledge” (Gonzales, 2004, p. 13).

It is also very helpful that the teacher has some experience with the translation process so that he/ she can better understand the difficulties students will encounter while translating, such as problems with translating different types of texts, timing, translation from L1 to L2 and vice versa, etc. On the other hand the teacher should never force the students to translate a text according to his/her point of view. “Rather, he is expected to ask the student why he has translated in a particular way, what decisions he has taken, and how he has reached that result” (Claramonte, n.d., p. 190). In other words the process of translating should be based on negotiating/ discussion and on the student – centred approach (rather than being text- and teacher- oriented like it was in the past) in order to develop the communication competence so that students know how to use the language in different social interactions. Therefore translation encourages the so called “collaborative learning”. This method is based on team-working/ working in small groups and on developing the social cohesion and positive working atmosphere within the classroom. In her book Leonardi explains that “According to the “collaborative learning” method, learning is viewed as a social process where knowledge is not transmitted from teachers to learners but is rather acquired through a series of discussions and negotiations”. (Leonardi, 2010, p. 119). In other words translation deepens not only the linguistic skills but also the

team spirit and collaboration in a classroom where every student feels responsible for the final result of the translation process.

Translation can be a time-consuming and demanding activity. Every student has a different working speed, different level of knowledge and abilities concerning the foreign language learning process. The teacher must avoid possible feelings of frustration and failure (some students are working more efficiently than the others) therefore a profound organization and preparation of the translation activity play a significant role. Popovic, n.d., states that “Translation is a serious business which requires careful preparation both on the part of the teacher and the learner” (p. 3).

Student type and his/ her personality aspects are other factors to consider and respect. According to Ellis (1985) there are four types of students: active, passive, experimental and studial” (p. 73). Therefore the classroom management (composition) plays a significant role (e.g. group work, discussions, role-playing, brainstorming). Furthermore many authors claim that from the humanistic point of view the effective learning depends on the positive relationship and between the students and their teacher who along with the students creates a complex structure of positive relationships that contribute to cooperative work and positive social interaction.

Not only the pleasant working atmosphere, positive learning environment, good group dynamics and the correct classroom management contribute to successful translation result. Motivation is one of the next important aspects of a productive learning. It is therefore recommended that at the beginning the teacher should choose easier authentic texts to be translated in order to raise students’ self-confidence and make their progress obvious in the long- term prospect while actively participating in the learning process that includes real-life/ authentic and topic- based tasks. In the words of many teachers “The material must be interesting and varied, covering the full range of styles and registers” (Štulajterova, 2008, p. 2). On the whole the need and motivation to look for solutions and for the own approach to translation will have a positive impact on the learning process that will be supported by the students’ personal involvement and engagement in learning.

With regard to motivation the teacher should take into consideration various factors such as the students’ awareness of the reason (why are they going to translate a text – gaining new knowledge in terms of grammar, vocabulary, etc.), the method how are they

going to translate (techniques, strategies, working methods etc.) to carry out the translation and how the final translation will benefit to them in terms of their linguistic proficiency.

### **A Basic Translation Framework for Classroom Translation**

Leonardi (2010) states that a basic pedagogical framework can be used in FL classroom in order to practice all language skills based on the integration of translation. This framework comprises of pre-translation activities, translation and post-translation activities.

Brainstorming, introduction of the topic, connected vocabulary or discussion are considered to form the pre-translation part. Reading, the translation process, grammar explanation, creation of a glossary, cultural competence or speaking and listening activities represent the second component of the framework. Finally an oral summary, discussion or commentary follow.

### **Evaluation of the Translation Process**

Every translation process and its result should be evaluated in order to provide students with feedback, to explain mistakes, to evaluate the level of knowledge, to compare students' progress and to find out if the set goals have been achieved. Every mistake the student makes should be considered an evidence of what and how the student has learned. As mentioned above the translation process depends on many factors (level of knowledge, learning style, abilities etc.) and therefore every teacher should bear in mind that he/she should assess the translation as a complex process that reflects student's abilities and apprehension. "I assume that all translation is partly science, partly craft, partly art, partly matter of taste" (Newmark, 1988, p. 189). Therefore translation should not be used as a test, or if so, the chosen text to be translated should correspond to the learned knowledge and should not contain features the students are not familiar with (e.g. unknown vocabulary, grammar).

Errors should not be considered a negative factor; they should rather provoke a text analysis that can be done either from the teacher or from the students (peer evaluation, discussions, etc.). Many teachers and specialists refuse the traditional way of evaluation that is based on correction of errors that diverge from the norm. A possible solution could

be the commented translation. This approach suggests that students have to explain the translation method they have chosen and take responsibility for their steps. In other words they have to demonstrate that the chosen word, verb pattern, tense, etc. is correctly used in the translation.

Translation can be evaluated as a process or as product. In other words the teacher can place a test or an exam or he/ she can systematically observe and analyse the students' participation and attitude within the whole translation process. It is recommended by many teachers to rather observe the translation as process from a long term perspective because "using the product as the only barometer is no guarantee that the evaluation will have a given degree of objectivity" (Álvarez, n.d., p. the Current State of Affairs, para. 3).

This chapter highlights the importance of translation within foreign language acquisition and provides many positive aspects of this method. The process of translating had a quite negative reputation in the last century but nowadays more and more teachers are revisiting this method because of its merits. For a long time the use of mother tongue in relation to foreign language learning has been refused because of its possibly negative aspects. The translation method shows that the mother tongue can be helpful aid for learners and should not be longer seen as a dubious aspect. Moreover, it should be an inseparable part of the foreign language learning (the fifth skill). The teachers' role plays a significant role within the translation process. The more detailed opinion about this method from the point of view of the teachers and students is explained in the following chapter.

### **III. METHODS**

This chapter describes in detail the method that has been used to carry out the research. On the whole, this part covers the research hypothesis and also clearly states how the research has been realised and analysed. The main focus has been laid on the role of translation in a classroom. It basically highlights its importance and function for students who learn English as their second language. Particularly I wanted to find out if translation activities are of any benefit to the students, if they think that translating is useful for their learning and if translating develops their basic language skills. Furthermore, the focus aims on different translation activities, on the directions of the translation (from L1 to L2 and vice versa) and also on the usage of the English/ Czech language in the classrooms.

#### **Research Tool and Respondents**

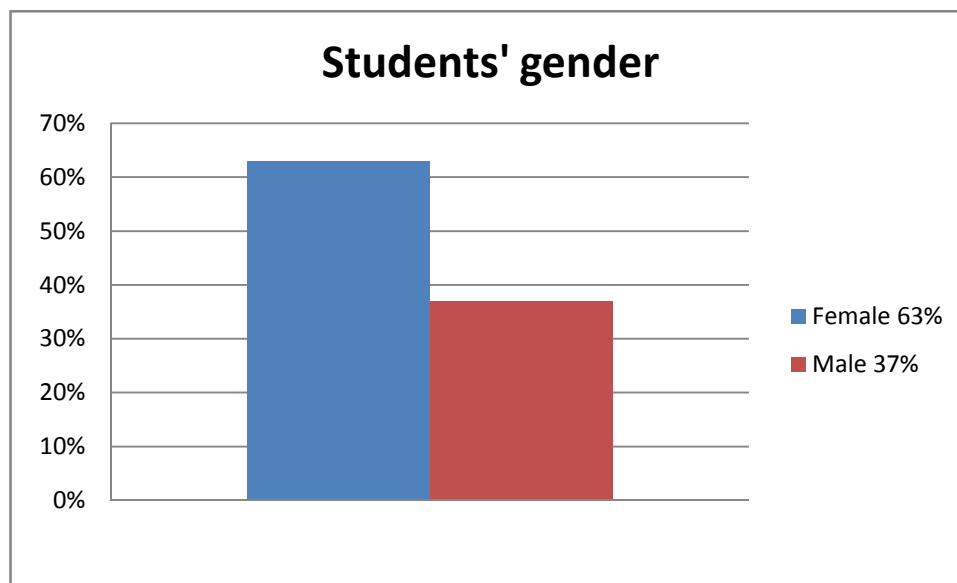
Firstly two versions of questionnaires that are based on the theoretical background of this thesis were compiled. After that 15 grammar schools from the South Bohemian and Pilsen region were asked via email or personally to take part in the research. Finally, 4 (1 from the South Bohemian and 3 from the Pilsen region) of the asked institutions were willing to cooperate on the project.

One version of the questionnaire was designed for the students and the second one was prepared for their teachers. The printed versions of the questionnaires were distributed to the grammar schools in order to be filled in anonymously. The students were asked to respond to 28 questions concerning the topic of translating and its application within the classroom and also to indicate the background information such as their age, gender and the length of their studies of English (see Appendix “A”). The questionnaires were compiled in the Czech language (both for students and teachers) so that the respondents (especially the students) understood the questions without problems. The student’s level did not differ significantly for the reason of keeping the objectivity of the whole project.

The questionnaire for teachers consisted of 11 questions (see Appendix “B”) that were aimed mainly on the usage of translation and its impact on students’ learning. Moreover the teachers were asked to state their age, gender, approbation, used textbook and the classroom specialisation. The questionnaires both for students and teachers

consisted of 2 different types of questions – of polar questions (agree, disagree) and of multiple choice questions

The data were collected during the month of May 2013. In total, 84 students and 9 teachers took part in the research. The average age of the teachers was 40 years and they had been teaching for 21 years on average. The average age of the students was 17 years; their level of knowledge was between elementary and upper-intermediate and on average they have been studying English for 8 years. The graph below depicts the gender structure of the students.



**Graph 1:** Students' gender

Consequently, graphs that describe the most important and surprising findings have been created and the results have been compared with the theoretical assumptions of the thesis. These are presented in the following chapter.

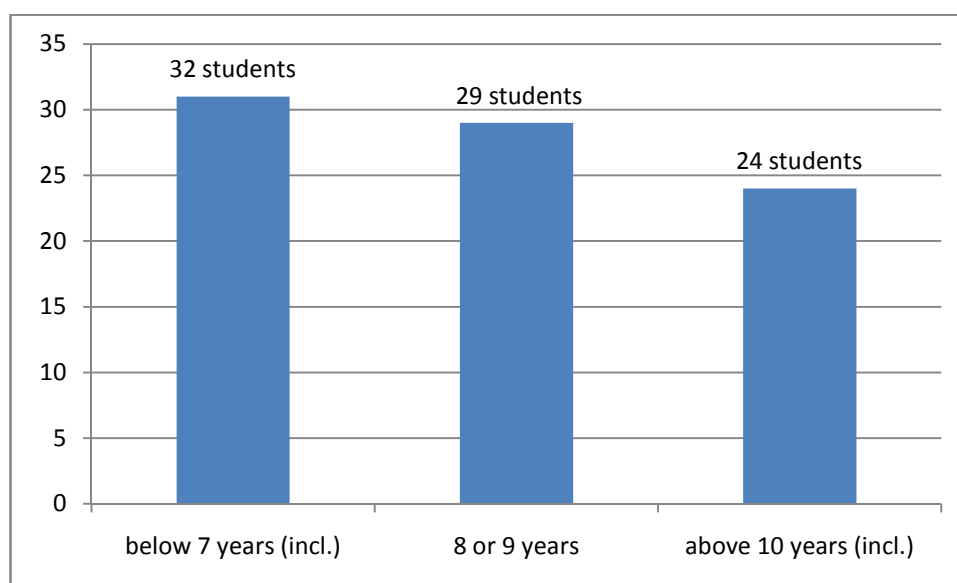


## IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter interprets and analyses the results of the research. The most important and interesting findings are highlighted and presented with the help of graphs and commentaries. Firstly, the general information concerning the respondents is introduced; secondly the results (following the theoretical part of the thesis) are presented in more detail.

### General Information

The students were divided into three different groups according to the number of years they have been studying English (see Graph 2) in order to be able to compare the most important findings to this fact. It is necessary to point out that this division does not relate to the level of knowledge the students have (the proportion - the more years a student studies English the higher level of knowledge he or she acquires - is not always valid).



**Graph 2:** The average length of studying English

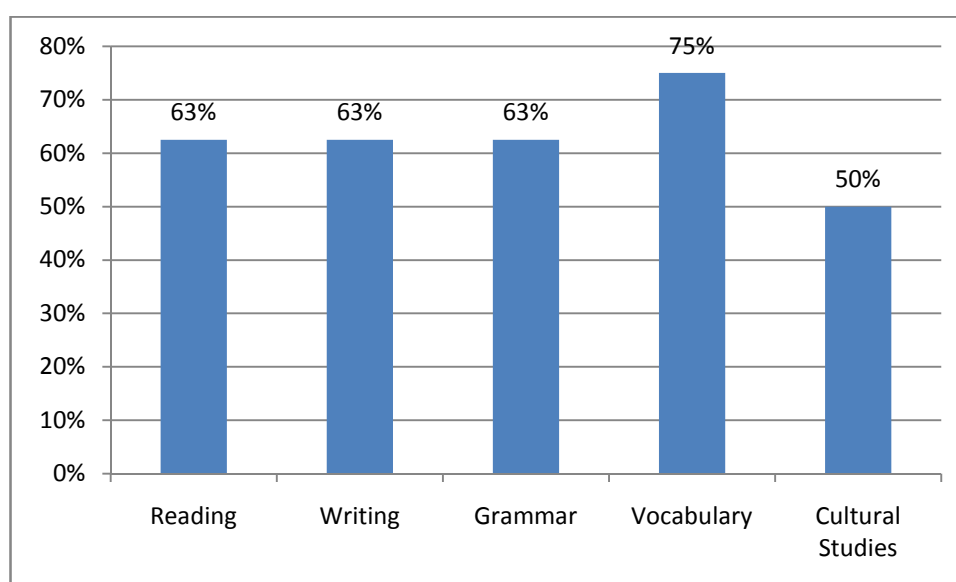
## Results and Commentaries

### Development of Language Skills by Translation Activities

As it is mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis by translating students can develop their basic language skills. To confirm this statement some of the questions in the questionnaire for the teachers were focused on the use of translation activities for the purpose of developing the reading and writing skills, for the sake of deepening new grammar, vocabulary and issues concerning the cultural studies in the English speaking countries.

Graph 3 shows clearly that translating is used by most of the teachers to enhance all the above mentioned items, mainly to introduce the new vocabulary. One of the reasons that support this result can be found in the fact that the more the students work with the new lexis the faster they remember it.

Furthermore, as it can be seen from the results the development of reading and writing skills and of the new grammar are being promoted by translating equally. Since the grammar acquisition and skills development are very important aspects of the language learning, it is obvious that teachers use various activities to enhance these. In other words the results have confirmed that teachers consider translating activities an inseparable and helpful part of their lessons.



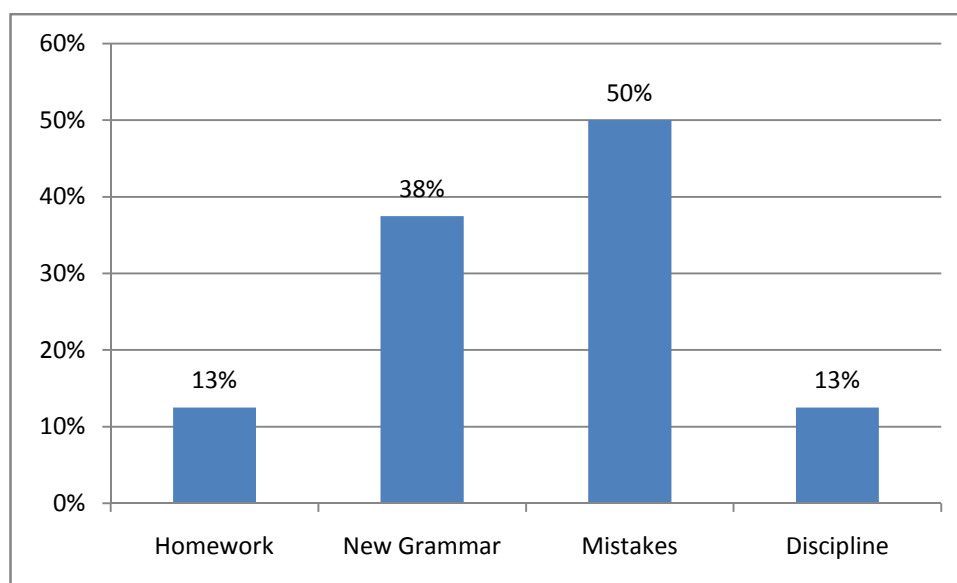
**Graph 3:** Development of Language Skills by Translation Activities

## Use of the Mother Tongue

The question whether the usage of L1 in the classroom is of any benefit for students is being discussed very often. Some teachers claim that they never use L1 in their lessons because it rather distracts students from learning English profoundly and they mention the aspect of negative interference. On the other hand, there is the second group of teachers who support the idea of the positive impact of usage of L1 in the classroom. Therefore the questions concerning this issue have been included into the questionnaire.

Generally the results of the questionnaire version designated for teachers have shown that most of them tend not to use the mother tongue in the classroom. The students have responded similarly because 68% of all respondents agreed that English is their preferred language within the classroom. On the other hand 83% of all students confirmed the fact that they incline to Czech explanation of the new grammar.

To be more specific the Graph 4 was created. This diagram deals with use of the mother tongue by teachers in various situations.



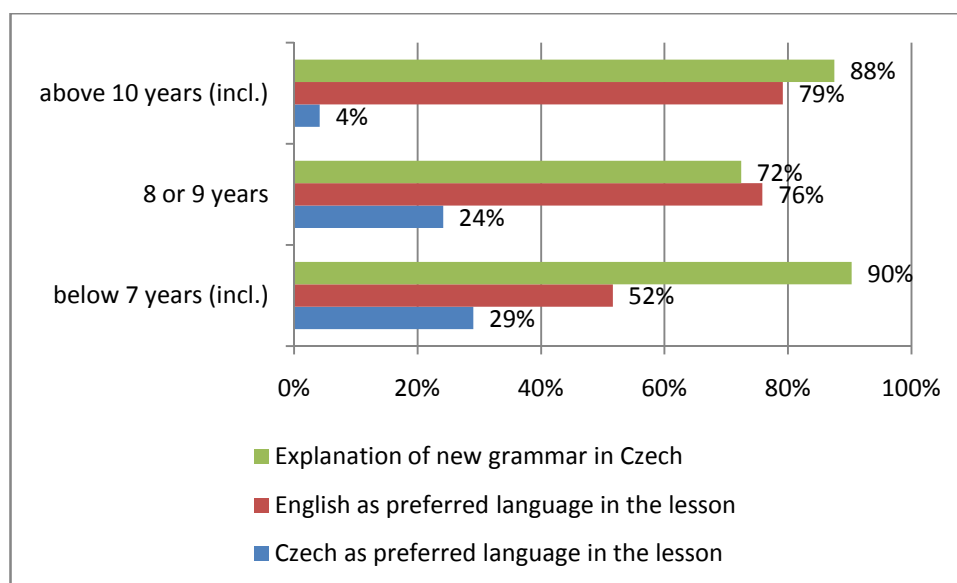
**Graph 4:** Use of mother tongue by teachers

As it is evident from the Graph 4 the majority of teachers uses the Czech language mainly for the explanation of mistakes. This fact corresponds with the answers collected from the students because mostly all of them prefer to go through the mistakes they have done in Czech in order to realise these better. Further 38% of teachers confirmed that they

use the mother tongue while explicating new grammar, which highlights the importance of grammar and its correct use.

To provide more details concerning this problematic the Graph 5 was compiled. It describes the dependence of the amount of years students have been studying English to the preferred classroom language and the language used for the grammar explanation. The graph shows that the more experience students have with the English language the less they insist on the usage of their mother tongue in the classroom. Concerning the explanation of grammar the experience with English does not play such a significant role. The graph shows that all three groups of students favour the Czech explanation of grammar regardless the time they dedicated to the learning of the foreign language.

Surprisingly, the results have also shown that even if the students are less experienced (less than 7 years) more than 50% of them want the teacher to speak English during the lesson.

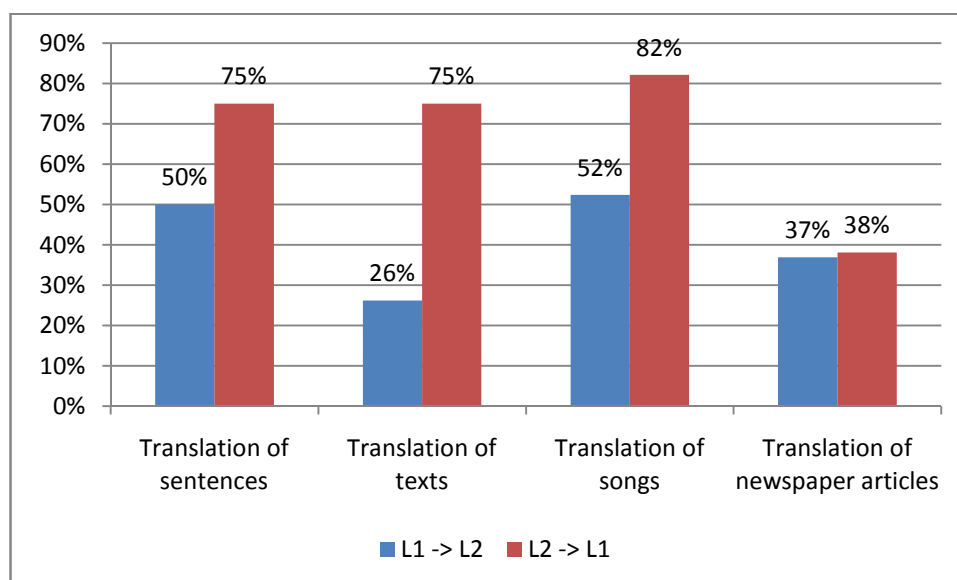


**Graph 5:** Preferred language within the classroom

## Direction of Translation

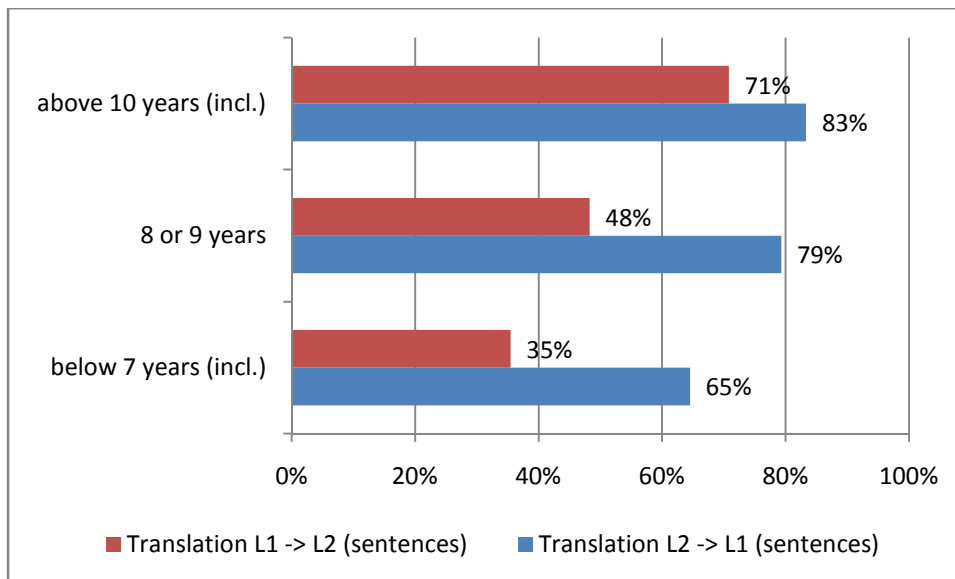
Translating can be effected in two possible directions. Either the students can translate a text written in their mother tongue into English, which corresponds to the way of direction from L1 into L2 or the process of translating can be carried out in the opposite way, i.e. from L2 into L1. It is said that the translation from the foreign language into the

mother tongue should be easier for the students because their knowledge of L1 is always deeper. In other words it is easier for them to produce a text in their mother tongue because they are more familiar with all the spheres of the language (syntax, morphology, lexis, etc.). To find out if this statement is applicable students were asked to consider the preferred direction of translating while working with short sentences, larger units of texts, with texts of songs and with newspaper articles. As it can be seen in the graph below (Graph 6) the findings have confirmed the theory because the students definitely enjoy more to translate from L2 into L1 in most of the cases. Only while working with a newspaper article the direction of translation does not play an important role. Possibly the students consider the translation of this kind of articles difficult in both directions.



**Graph 6:** The direction of translating from L1 to L2 or vice versa

To demonstrate in more detail the dependence of preferred direction of translation of short sentences in relation to the years students have been studying English the following Graph 7 has been created. This graph clearly shows that all three groups of students prefer to translate the sentences from English to Czech mainly because they consider this direction less difficult. The more significant difference can be observed by those students who have been studying English for less than ten years – evidently they incline to the direction from L2 into L1 more than those who have been studying English for 10 years and more.



**Graph 7:** Direction of translation of sentences

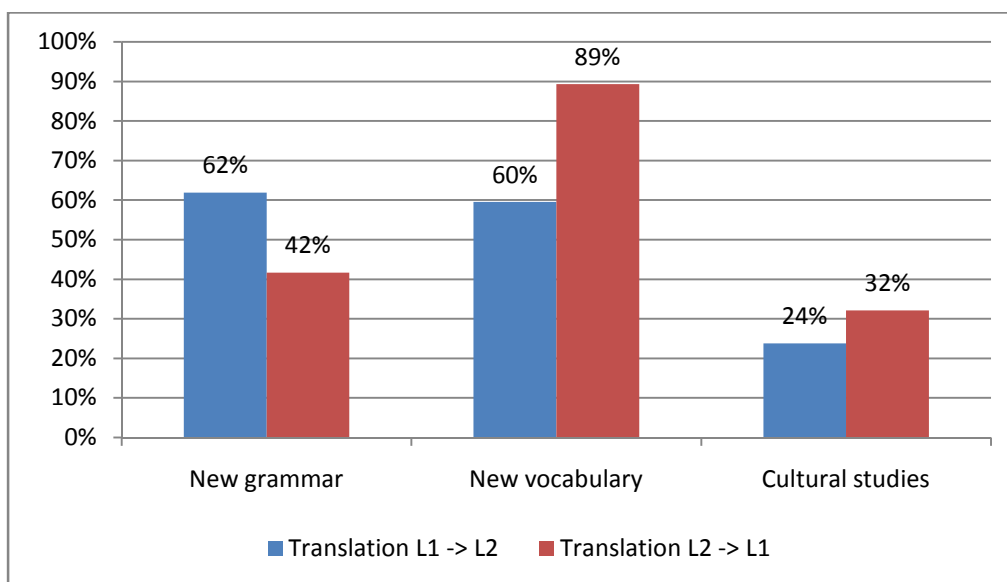
### **Acquisition of new grammar, vocabulary and intercultural knowledge in dependence on the direction of translation**

As it can be seen in the Graph 8 the profound knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is essential for the language learning and acquisition. According to many authors, translating activities enable students to memorise and learn new vocabulary, idioms, collocations and grammar rules faster because while translating they work with the language, they can compare the grammar rules of their L1 with those of L2 and realise the real meaning and usage of certain words and principles. Moreover, if the adequate text is chosen, the translation process can enhance the intercultural knowledge.

To support this theory students were asked which direction of translating helps them require the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and cultural studies. The results have shown that for most students it is easier to learn the new grammar while translating from their mother tongue into the foreign language. This outcome confirms that fact that while dealing with the more difficult issues it is easier to primary work with the language the learners know better.

On the other hand the new vocabulary is being learned and memorised faster when translating from L2 into L1. In other words the more the students work with the new vocabulary (looking for meaning, working with the new word in context, etc.) the easier they retain the unknown lexis.

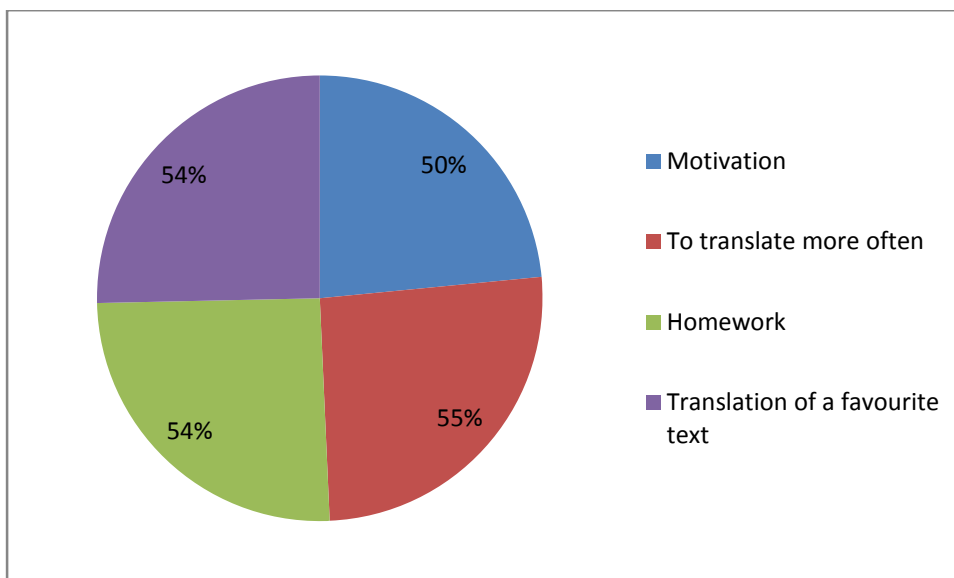
The results have indicated that while dealing with intercultural studies the direction of translating is not of much significance, which could be reasoned by the fact that while learning new facts about the English speaking countries the method of translation is not used so frequently.



**Graph 8:** Acquisition of new grammar, vocabulary and intercultural knowledge in dependence on the direction of translation

## Motivation

Without doubts motivation plays an important role within every second language acquisition. Therefore this aspect was included into the questionnaire. The following graph 9 is focused on the aspect of motivation students feel while dealing with translation activities. As it can be seen from the graph half of the students felt motivated while working on translation and even 54% of them do not mind to be assigned with translation as homework. 55% of all respondents would enjoy the possibility to translate more and to practice the second language with the help of more frequent translating activities as they regard it as profitable for their further development. Moreover 54% of students would like to bring a favourite text into the classroom and translate it with the help of the teacher and/or schoolmates, which increases the motivating feelings even more.

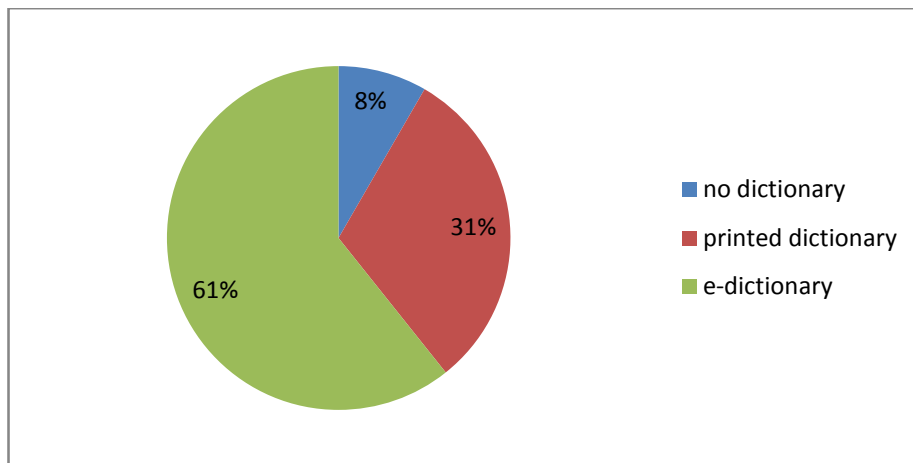


**Graph 9:** The motivating factor

### Use of Dictionaries

The usage of dictionaries is without doubt a part of the process of translating. Therefore some of the questions were focused on the work with different types of dictionaries and the Graph 9 was created in order to describe this issue. Most of the students find the possibility to be able to use the dictionary during the lesson beneficial and helpful not only because they feel less stressed but also because they learn the new vocabulary while working with the dictionary. The majority of learners (61%) prefer to use the e-dictionary, which can be seen as the result of the modern times we live in. The use of e-dictionaries can be of huge benefits to students because they can use them not only in the classroom but also in their free time.

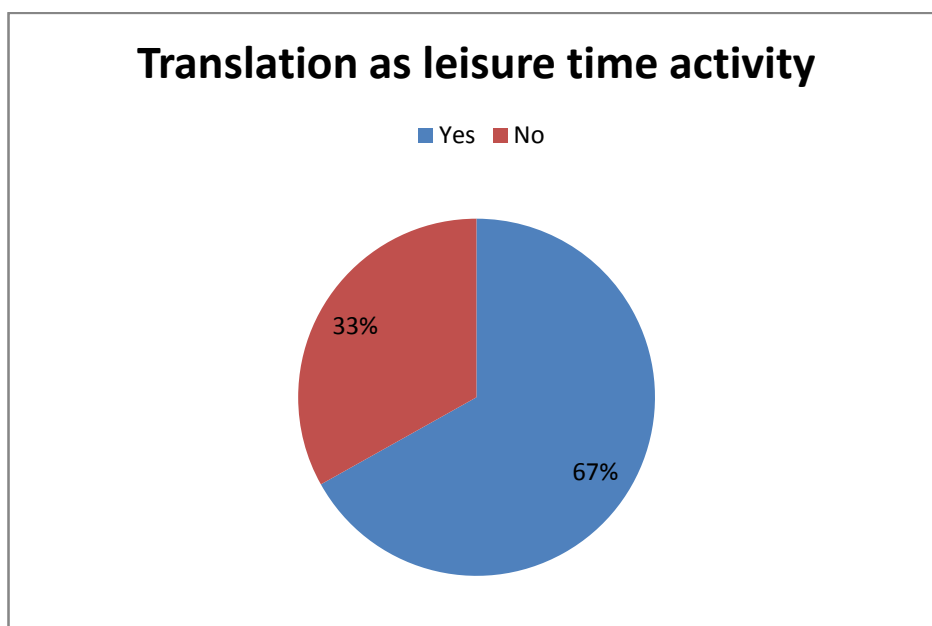




**Graph 10:** Usage of dictionaries

### **Translation as a part of leisure time activities**

The last questions of the research were focused on integration of translation in the leisure time of the students. Most of them stated that they translate different kinds of texts (mostly texts of songs) they are interested in also outside the classroom (see Graph 10). This fact supports the idea that if the students are motivated enough they transfer their interest to their leisure time activities. In other words, translation is a kind of activity that can be improved systematically and that can be adapted to the students' needs so that they feel motivated to translate not only inside the classroom but also in their free time.



**Graph 11:** Translation as a part of leisure time activities

## Summary

As it can be observed from the results of the research both students and teachers speak in favour of the translation activities while acquiring the second language. The outcomes have proved the hypothesis that translation is a beneficial activity helps students learn a foreign language. The research has shown that both students and teachers benefit from the translating activities and from other actions that are connected to translating.

Teachers tend to include translation into the classroom in order to develop both the writing and reading skills. Moreover thanks to translating students gain knowledge concerning the new vocabulary and grammar. Since the use of mother tongue has been questioned for a long time, some of the questions were focused on this dispute. The results showed that teachers use the native language mostly in order to explain mistakes and to introduce new grammar, which shows that the mother tongue is used in only in situations that require it. The students, on the other hand, prefer to speak English during the lesson as much as possible, regardless to their age and level of knowledge.

As mentioned above for most of the students the direction of translating from L2 into L1 causes fewer problems than translation from their mother tongue into English. This statement was confirmed by all three groups of students. The easier approach to the language by translating from L2 into L1 has been stated as the main reason. Concerning the acquisition of new grammar, vocabulary and cultural issues the direction from L2 into L1 was found to be more effective.

Finally, the usage of dictionaries and inclusion of translation into leisure time was analysed. The research demonstrates that the use of dictionaries inside the class is being considered helpful and beneficial. Moreover if the students are motivated enough they tend to deal with translating not only in the class but also in their free time, which can be regarded as a very positive aspect.

## **IV. IMPLICATIONS**

As mentioned above the research has shown that the use of translation within the classroom is appreciated by students. This chapter is divided into three parts; each of them is going to deal with translation activities from a slightly different point of view. Firstly, the teaching implications will be described. In other words the advice for implementing translation into the classroom will be explained. Secondly, the limitations and weaknesses of my research will be stated as there are some weak points of the research that should be mentioned. Finally, suggestions for further research and for productive expansion of the research will be mentioned.

### **Teaching Implications**

The fact that translation activities can be effectively implemented in the classroom has been already mentioned above. In this part I would like to depict the translation as a supporting activity within a classroom.

Translating develops all the basic language skills (is even sometimes considered the fifth skill) and therefore it can be used in the class any time. This is one of the main benefits of translating that should be mentioned. Not only reading, writing, speaking and listening can be developed with the help of translation. Teachers can use translating activities in order to introduce new vocabulary or in order to explain new grammar. The research has shown that 54% of all students prefer translation as homework; only 12% stated that translating is too difficult for them. This information shows to teachers that students do not think about translating in a negative way, they rather consider it an activity that is effective for their learning. Thanks to translating the differences/similarities of both languages can be explained, moreover attention can be drawn to the negative interference that can occur while learning a second language. These aspects surely favour the use of translation as means of comparison between two different languages. Furthermore while translating students can work in pairs or groups, which is motivating factor for most of the learners as they mostly prefer group work to the individual one.

Generally it can be claimed that translation was not used much in the past because of the negative connotations with the Grammar-Translations Method. The research has however, shown that both students and teachers are in favour of the use of translation and L1 while learning the second language.

### **Limitation of the Research**

One of the most significant limitations of my research represents the rather low number of respondents (both teachers and students) who took part in the research. Therefore the outcomes can not be generalised and applied as a whole.

Secondly, the grammar schools that agreed to participate on the project were mainly of the same speciality, which could be considered as another limitation of my project. On the other hand it would have been quite difficult to generalize the results of various grammar schools, because there are surely differences in the level of knowledge at every type of grammar school. Therefore the suggested further research could be focused on various grammar schools in order to apply the obtained data more diversely.

The questionnaire was chosen as the method for this research, which can be actually seen as a limitation because the evaluation of the results meets with a certain degree of subjectivity both on the side of the respondents and on my side. To be more specific, I personally consider the results that correspond to 50% or more sufficient for generalisation but this is only my personal feeling. The respondents were only expressing their opinions but there were no practical exercises within the questionnaire that would confirm these opinions on the method of translation. Moreover the fact that the teachers or students think that they agree with a given statement does not mean that this statement is valid in the real process of learning a second language. Therefore the chosen method could limit the research in this respect.

Concerning the chosen method the aspect of motivation can play a significant role. The students who took part in the research may not have been motivated enough to fill in the questionnaire carefully because in fact, they did not benefit from their effort at all. They were just asked to provide their answers and may be the teachers did not make the effort to explain them the importance of their answers. Moreover the questionnaire was rather long (28 questions), which could have discouraged the students from paying full attention to all the questions.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

As mentioned above as an expansion of this project the inclusion of more grammar school of various specialisations into this project can be carried out. This could ensure the

higher degree of objectivity and the results could then be applied on a larger group of students. Moreover the responded students were almost of the same age, I would suggest asking more students of various ages to take part in this project. This would surely bring new facts into the issue. It would then provide teachers with the information concerning the suitability of translation for students of different ages and different experience with the language.

Furthermore the research could focus on various types of texts that can be translated in the class. As the results showed students felt motivated while translating their favourite texts of songs and that they enjoy translating in their leisure time. The expansion of the project could focus on more texts the students would enjoy translating, on how these texts can be translated and how students can work with them.

The research confirmed that students enjoy the work with dictionaries and that they feel that working with a dictionary is beneficial for them. This finding could be also a topic of another research. This work could focus on translation and on use of dictionaries, what kinds of dictionaries can be used, which type the students prefer, etc.

Since translating deals with negative transfer focus could be laid also on this topic. The research could focus on the false cognates students encountered with while translating. Basically, the whole problematic of negative interference and also of the use of mother tongue could be discussed in connection with translation.

It is obvious that translating activities are a useful tool of teaching and learning the second language. Since not only students but also teachers think that this kind of activity can develop the approach to second language acquisition the topic various translating activities could be included in a further research. In other words, there are many approaches to translating (group works, projects, translation of various texts, back translation, etc.) that could be a topic of further research.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The main aim of this work was to highlight the important role of translation in an English classroom. To be more specific the positive impacts of translation activities on the second language acquisition were examined as the significance of translation is growing every day. Therefore both teachers and students should pay more attention to this issue. Moreover the use of mother tongue and its influence on the second language learning were discussed in order to provide both students and teachers with useful information that can be covered into the development of the four basic language skills, e.g., reading, writing, speaking and listening and also into the acquiring of new grammar and vocabulary.

In order to gather enough data concerning this topic two questionnaires were created and distributed among both teachers and students of various grammar schools. These questionnaires were focused on the frequency of using translating activities in the class, on the benefits of this method and on the motivating factor the translation can bring into the class. Moreover the use of mother tongue in the classroom and the directions of translations were discussed. The data were gathered and analysed and the most important and interesting findings were described in detail in the practical part of this thesis.

The carried research has shown that the use of translation is beneficial and helpful in the process of second language learning; moreover translating was indicated as motivating and useful activity that enables students to comprehend the new language and its structure. The outcomes have also confirmed that the use of mother tongue is a common feature in the second language classroom.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Czech version of the questionnaire for students

# Dotazník pro žáky

---

## **Instrukce:**

Tento dotazník se zabývá překládáním v hodině anglického jazyka. U každé otázky je možná jedna odpověď, **pokud není uvedeno jinak**.

Děkuji za tvůj čas a ochotu 😊

---

Jak dlouho se učím anglický jazyk (počet let):

Věk:

Pohlaví:

---

- 1. Možnost používat slovník v hodině mi usnadňuje práci (pokud souhlasíš, vyplň i otázku č. 2)**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

- 2. Jaký slovník v hodině používáš?**

Elektronický (v PC, mobilu, Ipodu,..) ☐

Tištěný ☐

- 3. Baví mě překlad jednotlivých vět z anglického jazyka do českého**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

- 4. Baví mě překlad jednotlivých vět z českého jazyka do anglického**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**5. Raději překládám anglické texty do českého jazyka**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**6. Raději překládám české texty do anglického jazyka**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**7. Baví mě překlad krátkých textů různého typu z anglického jazyka do českého i  
obráceně (zaškrtni odpovídající možnost/i):**

☐ Písničky

☐ Novinové články

☐ Dopisy

☐ Vtipy

Jiné (napíš jaké):

.....

**8. Nejraději bych překládal/a z českého jazyka do anglického (zaškrtni odpovídající  
možnost/i)**

☐ Novinové články

☐ Recepty

☐ Menu z restaurace

☐ Texty písní

☐ Jiné (napíš jaké) :

.....

**9. Nejraději bych překládal/a z anglického jazyka do českého (zaškrtni odpovídající  
možnost/i)**

☐ Novinové články

☐ Recepty

☐ Menu z restaurace

☐ Texty písní

☐ Jiné (napíš jaké) :

.....

**10. Líbilo by se mi donést do hodiny vlastní oblíbený anglický či český text a přeložit ho společně se spolužáky s pomocí učitele**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**11. Překládání z českého do anglického jazyka mě baví více než překlad z anglického jazyka do českého**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**12. Překlad z anglického do českého jazyka mi pomáhá pochopit novou gramatiku**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**13. Překlad z českého do anglického jazyka mi pomáhá pochopit novou gramatiku**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**14. Překlad z anglického do českého jazyka mi pomáhá zapamatovat si nová slovíčka**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**15. Překlad z anglického do českého jazyka mi usnadňuje (zaškrtni odpovídající možnost/i)**

☐ Pochopit novou gramatiku

☐ Zapamatovat si novou slovní zásobu

☐ Zapamatovat si reálie

**16. Překlad z českého do anglického jazyka mi usnadňuje (zaškrtni odpovídající možnost/i)**

☐ Pochopit novou gramatiku

☐ Zapamatovat si novou slovní zásobu

☐ Zapamatovat si reálie

**17. Líbí se mi pracovat ve skupině a překládat z anglického jazyka do českého i obráceně**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**18. Překlad mi jako domácí úkol vyhovuje**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**19. Chtěl/a bych při hodinách častěji překládat**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**20. Líbí se mi, když společně s učitelem procházíme chyby, které jsme při překladu udělali, protože pak lépe pochopím, proč jsem chybu udělal/a**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**21. Překládání mě nebaví, protože je pro mě příliš náročné**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**22. Upřednostňuji, když učitel v hodině mluví více česky, než anglicky**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**23. Vyhovuje mi, když učitel mluví celou hodinu jen anglicky**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**24. Upřednostňuji, když učitel vysvětluje novou gramatiku česky**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**25. Líbí se mi, když se mohu v hodině vyjádřit česky, pokud nevím, jak se vyjádřit v angličtině**

Souhlasím ☐

Nesouhlasím ☐

**26. Možnost mluvit při hodině angličtiny česky mi vyhovuje, protože:**

- ☐ Nejsem ve stresu  
☐ Nemám strach se vyjádřit  
☐ Jiné :

.....

**27. Na cizojazyčné filmy a seriály se dívám raději s titulky**

- Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

**28. Často si ve volném čase překládám anglické texty, které mě zajímají**

- Souhlasím ☐  
Nesouhlasím ☐

**Appendix B: Czech version of the questionnaire for teachers**

## Dotazník pro učitele

Tento dotazník byl sestaven jako výzkumná část mé diplomové práce, která se zabývá využitím překladu v hodině anglického jazyka. Prosím Vás o jeho vyplnění a předání k vyplnění té třídě, na kterou odpovědi směřujete.

Metodou překladu v tomto dotazník nemíním klasickou Grammar – Translation Method. Jedná se spíše o využití překladu jako metody pro rozvoj a doplnění jazykových dovedností.

Velice děkuji za Váš čas a ochotu.

---

**Používaná učebnice + úroveň:**

**Má praxe (počet odučených let):**

**Věk:**

**Pohlaví:**

**Mám aprobaci na obor anglický jazyk:**

☐ Ano  
☐ Ne

**Zaměření dotazované třídy (jazykové, humanitní, matematické,...) :**

---

- 1. Metodu překladu v hodině využívám rád/a. Pokud na tuto otázku odpovíte kladně, pokračujte k dalším otázkám. Pokud záporně, přejděte k otázce č. 11:**

☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím

- 2. Metoda překladu žáky motivuje:**

☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím  
☐ Nevím

- 3. Metodu překladu využívám k zapamatování nové slovní zásoby/ idiomů/ kolokací:**

☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím



**4. Překlad textů / vět zadávám jako domácí úlohu:**

- ☐ Nesouhlasím  
☐ Souhlasím

**5. Studenti díky překladu používají vysvětlené gram. jevy, uvědomí si jejich správné použití:**

- ☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím

**6. Studenty překlad baví:**

- ☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím

**7. Metoda překladu rozvíjí jazykovou dovednost čtení:**

- ☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím

**8. Metoda překladu rozvíjí jazykovou dovednost psaní:**

- ☐ Souhlasím  
☐ Nesouhlasím

**9. Pomocí metody překladu vyučuji (zaškrtněte odpovídající možnost/i) :**

- ☐ Gramatiku  
☐ Slovní zásobu  
☐ Reálie  
☐ Jiné: .....

**10. V hodině používám mateřský jazyk během (zaškrtněte odpovídající možnost/i):**

- ☐ Zadávání úkolu  
☐ Vysvětlování nové gramatiky  
☐ Vysvětlování chyb  
☐ Udržení kázně  
☐ Jiné: .....

**11. Metodu překladu nevyužívám, protože:**

- ☐ Je příliš komplikovaná  
☐ Žáci nebaví  
☐ Zabere příliš času  
☐ Jiné: .....

## APPENDICES

### Appendix C: The English version of the questionnaire for students

# Students' Questionnaire

---

## Instructions:

This questionnaire deals with the translation activities in the classroom. There is only one answer possible, **if not stated differently**.

Thank you for your time and kindness ☺

---

Experience with English language (how many years have you been learning English):

Age:

Gender:

---

- 1. The usage of dictionary facilitates the learning of English (If you agree continue to the question Nr.2)**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

- 2. What kind of dictionary do you use in the classroom?**

Electronic (PC, Mobile Phone, Ipad,...) ☐  
Printed ☐

- 3. I enjoy the translating of sentences from English to Czech**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

- 4. I enjoy translating of sentences from Czech into English**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

- 5. I prefer to translate English written texts into Czech**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

- 6. I prefer to translate Czech written texts into English**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

**7. I enjoy translating of short texts of various kinds from English into Czech and vice versa (select one or more answers):**

☐ Songs

☐ Newspaper articles

☐ Letters

☐ Jokes

Others: .....

**8. I would like to translate from Czech into English (select one or more answers)**

☐ Newspaper articles

☐ Recipes

☐ Menus

☐ Texts of songs

☐ Others: .....

**9. I would like to translate from English into Czech (select one or more answers)**

☐ Newspaper articles

☐ Recipes

☐ Menus

☐ Texts of songs

☐ Others: .....

**10. I would like to chose an English or Czech written text, bring it to the classroom and translate it with my classmates and with the help of the teacher**

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

**11. I prefer to translate texts from Czech into English than from English into Czech**

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

**12. Translating from English into Czech helps me understand new grammar**

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

**13. Translating from Czech into English helps me understand new grammar**

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

**14. Translating from English into Czech helps me remember new vocabulary**

Yes ☐

No ☐

**15. Translating from English into Czech facilitates (select one or more answers)**

- ☐ Understand new grammar
- ☐ Remember new vocabulary
- ☐ Remember new issues concerning the cultural studies

**16. Translating from Czech into English facilitates (select one or more answers)**

- ☐ Understand new grammar
- ☐ Remember new vocabulary
- ☐ Remember new issues concerning the cultural studies

**17. I enjoy working in group with my classmates and translate from English into Czech and vice versa**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**18. I enjoy translating as homework activity**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**19. I would like to translate more in the class**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**20. I prefer to go through the mistakes I have made while translating with the teacher, because I realize the mistakes better**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**21. I do not like translating because it is too difficult for me**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**22. I prefer when the teacher speaks more Czech than English in the class**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**23. I prefer when the teacher speaks English the whole lesson**

- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

**24. I prefer when the teacher explains the new grammar in Czech**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

**25. I prefer to have the possibility to speak in Czech in the class in the case I am not sure about the English expression**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

**26. The possibility to speak Czech in the lesson suits me because (select one or more answers):**

- ☐ I do not feel stressed  
☐ I do not feel the anxiety to speak out  
☐ Others:

.....

**27. I prefer to watch the foreign language movies with subtitles**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

**28. I often translate various texts in my free time**

Agree ☐  
Disagree ☐

## APPENDICES

### Appendix D: The English version of the questionnaire for teachers

# Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been compiled as the practical part of my thesis that deals with the role of translation in an English classroom. I kindly ask you to fill in this questionnaire.

In the case of this study the term "translation method" bears no relation to the classical Grammar-Translation Method. It rather refers to a method that develops the basic language skills. Thank you for your time and kindness.

---

**Used textbook + level:**

**My teaching experience (number of years I have been teaching English):**

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Qualification for teaching English:**

☐ Yes  
☐ No

**Classroom specialisation (mathematics, languages, general,...) :**

- 
- 1. I use the method of translating frequently in the classroom. If you replay in the affirmative, continue to the next questions. If not answer the question Nr.11:**

☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

- 2. Translating activities motivate the learners:**

☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Not sure

- 3. Translating helps students memorise new vocabulary/ idioms/ collocations:**

☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

- 4. Translation of texts/ sentences is a frequent homework activity:**

☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

- 5. Thanks to translating students use the explained grammar rules, they realise the correct usage of these:**

☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

**6. Students enjoy the translating activities:**

- ☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

**7. Translating develops the reading skills:**

- ☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

**8. Translating develops the writing skills:**

- ☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree

**9. I use the translating activities to (select one or more answers):**

- ☐ Grammar  
☐ Vocabulary  
☐ Cultural Studies  
☐ Others: .....

**10. I use the mother tongue within the classroom when (select one or more answers):**

- ☐ Homework assignment  
☐ Explanation of new grammar  
☐ Errors explanation  
☐ Discipline maintaining  
☐ Others: .....

**11. I do not employ the translating activities, because:**

- ☐ It is too complicated for the students  
☐ Students do not enjoy it  
☐ It is time consuming  
☐ Others: .....

## SHRNUTÍ

Tématem této diplomové práce je úloha překladu v hodině anglického jazyka.

Teoretická část je zaměřená na historický vývoj metody překladu, na možné přínosy překládání jak pro studenty, tak pro učitele. Dále je popsán pozitivní dopad této metody na rozvoj jazykových dovedností. Zmíněna je také problematika používání mateřského jazyka během výuky, možné směry překladu a úloha učitele během procesu překládání.

Praktická část je zaměřena na používání překladových cvičení v hodině anglického jazyka, zejména na frekvenci používání překladu, na motivační faktor a na vliv, který mají překladová cvičení na získávání znalostí v cizím jazyce.